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Slavery and the domestic slave trade

7 minutes, Society of 1-12-1839 from yearly meeting

SLAVERY

AND THE

DOMESTIC SLAVE TRADE,

IN

THE UNITED STATES.

BY THE COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY THE LATE YEARLY
MEETING OF FRIENDS HELD IN PHILADELPHIA, IN
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ON SLAVERY, &c .

SLAVERY is the exercise of arbitrary power, vested in one man over another, by the sanction of law, or common usage; extending, in some cases, to the taking of life, as among the ancient Romans ; and in others, accompanied by certain restraints, imparting to it a mild and lenient character, as that which prevailed among the Israelites. Hence, the records of history exhibit this institution among the nations of antiquity, in different degrees of severity, between these two extremes. The term slavery, therefore, furnishes us with no just conceptions of the amount of evil embraced by it, and it becomes necessary in order to arrive at this knowledge, to inquire into its character in each particular case or nation.

In justification of this institution in the United States, it is alleged, that slavery has existed in every age of the world : that the scriptures lend it their unqualified sanction ; that the slavery now existing on the continent of Africa is in its character more rigorous than that in the United States ; and hence, that the condition of the natives brought from that country, has been improved by the exchange. As these arguments intrude upon us at the threshold, we will give them a brief consideration, before entering upon the main subject of this treatise.

Under the Mosaic dispensation, a Hebrew might be de-

prived of his freedom in several ways. In extreme poverty he could sell himself, and a father his children in a like case. Lev. xxv. 39. Exod. xxi. 7. Debtors were liable to become the bondmen of their creditors. 2 Kings iv. 1. If a thief was unable to pay the penalty of his crime, he was directed to be sold. Exod. xxii. 3. A Hebrew, ransomed by a Hebrew, might be sold by the latter. In all these cases they were bought as hired servants, and the term of servitude was limited to six years. Exod. xxi. 2.

The case of the Gibeonites was peculiar, and occasioned by a fraud practised by them upon Joshua, to secure a treaty. "Wherefore have ye beguiled us, saying, 'we are very far from you,' when ye dwell among us? Now, therefore, ye are cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood, and drawers of water for the house of my God." Joshua xix. 22, 23. The disgrace and hardship of this servitude, however, do not appear to have consisted in the *laboriousness* of the service itself, but in degrading the Gibeonites, by depriving them of the characteristic employment of men, and substituting that which custom left to women and children.* As a nation, they lost their independence, and were obliged to furnish a levy of men for the Hebrew service.

In case of a Hebrew servant marrying a stranger, a Canaanite, for instance, (for so the passage in Exod. xxi. 4, must be understood,) the husband went out free in the seventh year, but his wife and children remained servants to the master. A humane provision is here made, however, to prevent the severing of conjugal and parental ties. "But if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children, I will not go out free;" he could not then be separated from his family; but his ear was

* See Harman on the text.

bored through with an awl, in evidence of his having chosen to live with them in a state of servitude. Exod. xxi. The Hebrew man and maid servant, who chose to remain with the master, were treated in like manner. Deut. xv. 17.

Having thus briefly set forth the ground and origin of the servile state among the posterity of Abraham, we proceed to give a summary of its principal features, as follows:

1. The time of servitude of a Hebrew was limited, at most, to six years; and all others were released in the year of Jubilee, and in addition, had the lands of their ancestors restored to them. "Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound"—"and ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim *liberty* throughout all the land, *unto all the inhabitants thereof.*" Levit. xxv. 10.

2. The Hebrew servant received a compensation for his services. "And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty; thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy wine-press, of that wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed thee; thou shalt give unto him." Deut. xv. 13, 14.

3. Oppression and cruelty to servants, in all cases, are strictly forbidden, and anxiously guarded against throughout the Law and the Prophets, the Israelites being often reminded of their having been strangers, and under bondage in the land of Egypt. Deut. xv. 15.

4. The master was compelled to keep his servant; he could not turn him off, or otherwise dispose of him, if he chose to stay with him. Infirmary, age, or disability, *appears* to have made no exceptions to this rule. Exod. xxi. Deut. xv.

5. The servant, on the other hand, could escape from

under oppression or cruelty, without the fear of pursuit, or compulsory return ; “Thou shalt not deliver unto his master, the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee ; he shall dwell with thee, even among you in that place which he shall choose, in one of thy gates where it liketh him best ; *thou shalt not oppress him.*” Deut. xxiii. 15, 16.

6. The servant was admitted into covenant with God, and was instructed at stated times, in morality and religion. Deut. xxix. 11, 12. xxxi. 12. Josh. viii. 35. 2 Chron. xvii. examine 9th verse.

7. In all the Jewish festivals, the servant feasted and rejoiced in common with the master ; “And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man servant, and thy maid servant, and the Levite, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates.” Deut. xvi. 14.

8. These festivals were so numerous, that if we include the sabbath and sabbatical year, it will be found that the servant enjoyed a period of relaxation from regular labor, amounting to nearly one-half of his whole time.

Such is a brief view of slavery as it existed under the Mosaic dispensation ; partaking more of the character of a patriarchal government than of slavery ; and on the part of the servant, more a matter of choice than of compulsion.

Among the barbarous and idolatrous nations of antiquity, their slaves consisted generally of prisoners, taken in wars with neighboring tribes, and were treated in some instances, with great cruelty ; yet, even here, slavery possessed some features, which softened its rigor, and blunted its asperity. Among the Egyptians, the slave found in the temple of Hercules, a secure retreat from the iron rod of his mas-

ter, and held the right of obtaining his discharge.* The bondage of the children of Israel appears to have originated from a fear of their numbers, rather than from a spirit of avarice or injustice. *Exod. i. 10, 11.*

According to the history, a part of the nation only was under "task masters," and that part consisting chiefly of the male sex, raised, as it would seem, by a levy or conscription. They had their separate lands, houses, &c., in the rich province of Goshen, and possessed flocks and herds, and "very much cattle;" and hence, although tributary, had the advantages of a distinct community, with its own form of government and internal rule. Those who were under task-masters were doubtless made to serve with "rigor," but they were not stinted in food; they "sat by the flesh-pots, and did eat bread to the full." "We remember," said they, "the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic." *Exod. xvi. 3. Numb. xi. 5.*

But not only the Old, but the New Testament is appealed to, in support of American slavery. The following is extracted from the *American Quarterly Review*, No. 23, page 248, published in 1832.

"When we turn to the New Testament, we find not one single passage, at all calculated to disturb the conscience of an honest slaveholder. No one can read it without seeing and admitting that the meek and humble Saviour of this world, in no instance meddled with the established institutions of mankind—he came to save a fallen world, and not to excite the black passions of men, and array them in deadly hostility against each other. From no one did he turn away; his plan was offered alike to all—to the monarch and the subject—the rich and the poor—the master

* *Rees' Cyclopediæ.*

and the slave. He was born in the Roman world, a world in which the most galling slavery existed—a thousand times more cruel than the slavery of our own country—and yet he no where encourages insurrection—he no where fosters discontent,—but exhorts *always* to implicit obedience and fidelity. What a rebuke does the Redeemer of mankind imply upon the conduct of some of his nominal disciples of the day, who seek to destroy the contentment of the slaves, to rouse their most deadly passions, to break up the deep foundations of society, and to lead on to a night of darkness and confusion! ‘Let every man, (says Paul) abide in the same calling wherein he is called. Art thou called, being a servant?—care not for it; but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather.’ 1 Corinth. vii. 20, 21. Again: ‘Let as many servants as are under the yoke, count their own masters worthy of double honor, that the name of God and his doctrines be not blasphemed; and they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren, but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort.’ 1 Tim. vi. 1—11. Servants are even commanded in Scripture to be faithful and obedient to unkind masters. Servants, (says Peter) be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but to the froward. For what glory is it, if when ye shall be buffeted for your faults, ye take it patiently? but if when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently—this is acceptable to God.’ 1 Peter, xi. 18—20. These and many other passages in the New Testament convincingly prove, that slavery in the Roman world, was no where charged as a fault or crime upon the holder, and every where is the most implicit obedience enjoined. See Ephes. vi. 5—9. Titus, xi. 9, 10. Philemon, Colossians, iii. 22. and iv. 1.”

We agree with this writer when he says, that our Lord meddled with *none* of the institutions of his time, civil or political, *as such*; but had He condemned some and not others, or had He been silent only on that of slavery; the author would then have had a plausible ground for the broad conclusion which he has drawn; but having “meddled with none” of them, corrupt, and opposed to the religion which He taught, as many of them certainly were, we are obliged to seek another reason for this silence, than that of a tacit justification “of Roman slavery,” and more especially if it was, as the writer asserts, “a thousand times more cruel than the slavery of our own country!”

The doctrine and precepts taught by our Lord, indicate the kind of reform contemplated, and afford an ample illustration of the reason why he refrained from an open and outward opposition to the corrupt institutions of that period. He taught that all sin and corruption proceed from the *heart* of man, as their root, and here he laid the gospel axe. Matt. xii. 35. Mark, iii. 10. Luke, iii. 9. The reform was to be radical, and not merely a lopping of the *branches* of the corrupt tree. Thus, with spiritual weapons—his word, power, spirit, he attacked sin in its throne, the heart, whence proceeds all unrighteousness. Mark vii. 20. And the *tree* being made good, the *fruit* will be good also. Matt. vii. 17, 18. xxi. 33. Again, when he says, “Therefore, *all things* whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them,” he strikes at the root of all cruelty, injustice and oppression. See Matt. vii. 12. And again, he removes, at once, the causes of war, strife, and contention, when he enjoins obedience to the precepts, “Resist not evil—overcome evil with good—love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use

you, and persecute you. Matt. v. 39 to 48. Romans xii. 21.

To the author's assertion that the New Testament "conclusively proves that slavery in the Roman world was nowhere charged as a fault or crime upon the holder, we reply :

1. No evidence is adduced to prove that the servants addressed by the apostles were *slaves*.

2. If they were slaves, the "implicit obedience enjoined," no more proves slavery to be just and right, than the command to "return good for evil," proves the latter not to be evil, or that cursing and hatred imply no sin, because to be requited by blessing and love. The advice given to the servants, was given to them, not as servants merely, but as *Christians*, because in accordance with the precepts of Christ, which are obligatory upon *all* his followers, whatever may be their condition in life, or from whatever quarter cruelty and persecutions may arise ; hence they belong to the *master* equally with the servant.

3. Thus Paul, after exhorting servants to obedience, adds : " knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same he shall receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or *free*. And ye *masters* do the *same things* unto them, (the servants) *forbearing threatening*; knowing that *ye also* have a *Master* in heaven : neither is there *respect of persons* with him." Ephes. vi. 8, 9. Again, " Masters give unto your servants that which is *just and equal*, knowing that ye also have a *master* in heaven." Collos. iv.

1. And further, the same apostle in sending back Onesimus, whom he had converted to the Christian faith, to his master Philemon, writes to the latter to " receive him, not now as a servant, but as *above* a servant, a *brother* below-

ed specially to me, but how much *more* unto thee, *both* in the *flesh* and in the Lord." Philemon.

4. The gospel is love, tenderness, peace and good will to men. Its whole spirit is opposed to American slavery. Even under the preceding dispensation, which was "but as a shadow of good things to come," miracles were wrought to redeem a nation from bondage, bringing heavy judgments on their oppressors. How much less can it be tolerated under the gospel? The following pages show that negro bondage, with the domestic slave traffic, in this country inflict upon human beings a degree of cruelty, injustice, and oppression, seldom equalled even in the pagan world,—bring down its victims almost to a level with the brute,—is highly corrupting to its authors—and destructive to every interest. How is it possible for a sound mind to entertain the thought for a moment, that a system replete with such a mass of iniquity is so far justified by the scriptures that not "a single passage" can be found there "at all calculated to disturb the conscience of an honest slaveholder?" Yet the crimes which constitute its essence, and without which it could not have a name to live, to wit: avarice, cruelty, injustice and oppression, are every where condemned in both the Old and the New Testament, (more especially the latter) as among the most offensive in the catalogue of sins!! This fact is so universally known and acknowledged, that it is not necessary to refer to texts to prove it.

It is in vain, therefore, for any, in this age of gospel light, when "God is calling upon man, every where, to repent," to attempt to cover these crimes under false pretences; their hope is the hope of the hypocrite, that shall perish. Job viii. 13. It is the duty of all Christians to testify against them, whether they exist in the relation of master

and slave, or elsewhere. But in an especial manner does it behoove those who stand in the station of ministers of the most just, most equal, and most merciful religion of Jesus Christ, to abide faithful in their calling, and to "cry aloud and spare not."

Does the fear or favor of man, the love of ease, or of filthy lucre, cause some to shrink from the discharge of those highest and most imperative of ministerial duties? We fear that there are not a few among the different denominations of Christians, who, girded, professedly, with the linen Ephod, are unfaithful to the high trust; and even some who despise not "the gain of oppressions," nor shake their hands "from holding of bribes." Great, we fear, will be the condemnation of such. In vain may they answer the Son of man, saying; "Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?" The reply must remain to be, "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not unto me." Matt. xxv. 45.

By the laws of Minos, King of Crete, cruelty and injustice to slaves were prohibited, and their masters were required, once in the year, namely, at the feast of Mercury, to exchange situations with their slaves, for whom they performed the same servile offices, during the remainder of the year, which they (the masters) were accustomed to receive.*

At Athens, the slaves were treated with so much humanity, that it was a saying of Demosthenes, that "the condition of a slave at Athens was preferable to that of a free citizen in other countries." When maltreated, they found a refuge in the temple of Theseus, where the Legis-

* Morelle.

lature inquired into, and redressed their wrongs. They were allowed the important privilege of working for themselves, amassing property, and purchasing their freedom.*

The Helots, in Sparta, were public slaves, and barbarously treated. They farmed the lands of the proprietors at a certain rent, inferior to the produce, and which it was deemed disgraceful to increase. Possessing the means of acquiring property, they became rich, and being numerous, were insolent and difficult to govern; and from this cause, it is said, were often treated with great cruelty. They could not be sold out of the small state of Laconia.† By new services they might be advanced to the rank of citizens. The state of servitude among the ancient Germans seldom incurred corporal infliction, chains, or oppression; and was limited to furnishing the master with a certain quantity of the produce made by the slave.

The slaves of the Romans were of all nations and complexions. They held the power of life and death over their slaves, but they held the same power over their own children; a power not possessed by any other nation. They treated their slaves with the greatest cruelty, which, as the barbarous state gave place to one more civilized, was restrained by humane laws, as under the emperor Hadrian, and his successors. Yet some mitigating circumstances were attached to slavery, even among the Romans: The slave had the anticipation of liberty, the privilege conferred on him by the master, of amassing property, called the slave's *peculium*, with which he was permitted to trade, to improve his condition, and often to purchase his freedom. He could also fly to temples as sanctuaries, to drag him from which was deemed sacrilege. His master did not

* Rees' Cyclopediæ. † Ibid.

fear to instruct him, and Atticus, Crassus, Virgil, Mæcenas, &c., manifested much anxiety for the education of their slaves.

In our inquiries into the present state of slavery in Africa, we shall not attempt to reconcile the contradictory statements of different travellers and writers, on this subject; but shall avail ourselves at once, of the best testimony upon record; namely: that rendered before the British House of Commons, pending the discussion in that body, of the abolition of the African slave trade.

Governor Barnes, who resided thirteen years in Africa, testified, "that house slaves were not sold, except for crimes;"—"the slaves of black masters are very well fed, except in famines, with corn and fish. They are not worked for any regular time, nor constantly, and never under the whip."

J. B. Weuves, Esq., who resided fourteen years in Africa, testified, that "slaves are the greatest part of their wealth. There are born slaves, and purchased slaves. The born slaves cannot be sold except for crimes. They are tried by judges of their own clan, i. e., slaves belonging to, and inherited by one man. The punishment is generally *slavery*. They are made slaves for theft, witchcraft, &c. For these crimes, *freemen* are also made slaves."

To comprehend how those who are *already slaves* can be punished for crimes as *freemen* are punished by being reduced to slavery, we must, of necessity, infer that the domestic slave in Africa, is himself essentially a free man.

Captain Wilson testified, that "the slaves employed by the Africans, live with their masters, and are so treated as to be scarcely distinguishable from them."

J. Kierman, who was about four years in Africa, testi-

fied, that “ persons of property there, have a great number of persons under the denomination of slaves, whom they trust as Europeans would persons of their own family.”

Z. Macauley, formerly governor of Sierra Leone, testified before the house of Lords, as follows :

“ I have frequently made the attempt to ascertain the proportion which the slaves in that country bear to the freemen. I made it an object in every place that I happened to visit ; but so much alike in their appearance, in their treatment, and in the conduct observed towards them, are the domestic slaves in that country and the freemen, that I found it impracticable, unless I went to make *individual* investigation, to ascertain that proportion.” “ I was never able to discriminate between the son and the domestic slave of any chief.” “ Field labor is performed by free people, and by the domestic slaves jointly and indiscriminately.”

We might go on to quote further evidence to the same effect, but enough is presented to silence the argument, that the African improved his condition, in exchanging the slavery of his own country for that of the New World.

About the close of the 13th century, the Christian religion put an end to slavery in most parts of Europe. A religion which plainly inculcates equality of rights, duties, and destiny, for all the children of men without distinction, and which makes them equally the objects of Divine benevolence and regard, cannot fail, when its doctrines and principles are *reduced to practice* to eradicate an evil which they so manifestly condemn. But two centuries, however, had scarcely elapsed, before a great falling off was experienced ; and a traffic in human beings was introduced among the nations of Christendom, bearing a

character for oppression and cruelty, more aggravated in iniquity, than any that the world had ever before witnessed ! The Portuguese nation became first engaged in the African slave trade, and other nations soon followed the example. In 1620, a Dutch ship, freighted with its living cargo of misery, sailed up the James river, from the coast of Guinea, and brought the first slaves into British America. England came in afterwards for her full share of the trade; despatched her ships in great numbers to Africa, and loading them with the unoffending inhabitants, poured these victims of her avarice and cruelty into her West Indian and American possessions. The government at home was applied to, to stop the importation—but in vain. The thirst for gold prevailed; and the institution of negro slavery became thus established in the American Colonies.

1. Negro slavery as it exists in the United States, bears a character, in some respects, unknown among the ancients, where the master and bondman were generally of the same race, both black, or both white. Here the parties are of different races, and that difference generally strongly marked by the color of the skin; hence, the degradation attendant on this condition has become associated, however erroneously, with the African complexion; and more or less of prejudice or aversion toward the whole colored race, finds an entrance into the mind through this medium. In the South, every colored person is considered and treated as a slave until the contrary is proved. And in the North, although not deemed a slave, he is generally treated as one inheriting the degradation attached to the servile state. Thus the color of his skin marks him out for proscription. What strange perversity in man!—that a feature which the hand of the Creator has stamped upon the African through the secondary causes of location and climate,

should be laid hold of, as a reason to oppress and degrade him!

2. The slave is held as a personal chattel; and in most of the slave states, is liable at all times, to be sold, removed, mortgaged, or leased, at the will of the master or his executors, or at the suit of creditors. This feature of American slavery, as we shall presently see, opens a door to the internal traffic, in the exercise of which are practised the greatest enormities.

3. The master may determine the kind, quantity, and time of the slave's labor.

4. The master may supply the slave with such food, and clothing only, both as to quality and quantity, as he may think proper, or find convenient.

5. The master may, at his discretion, inflict any punishment upon the person of his slave. (This, of course, excludes power over life or limb.) There are, we believe, laws to protect the slave from the inflictions of cruel masters, &c.—but the universal principle pervading the slave states, that no colored person can be a witness in any case, against a white man, renders all such laws a dead letter, except, perhaps, in very extreme cases.

6. Slaves have no legal rights of property in things real or personal: but whatever they may acquire, belongs in point of law, to their masters.

7. A slave cannot be a party before a judicial tribunal, in any species of action against his master.

8. Slaves cannot redeem themselves: and in several of the states emancipation without removal is prohibited.

9. If injured by third persons, their owners only may bring suits, and recover damages.

10. Slaves can make no contract, nor be party to a civil suit, nor be witnesses against a white person.

11. The benefits of education are mostly withheld from the slave, and in some of the Southern states, to teach him is punished as a crime. The means of moral and religious instruction are seldom, or but sparingly, granted him.*

12. No effectual provision is made to restrain the slaves from the grossest licentiousness, by laws to encourage marriage, or by other means.

13. Slaves escaping from their masters can be recovered within any part of the United States, by an Act of Congress, called the Fugitive law : by which the person claimed can be brought by warrant before a Justice of the Peace, or Judge of the Court : *to either of whom is given the power to determine the right of the claimant.* Any person interfering in the removal of the individual thus claimed, is liable to a penalty of five hundred dollars.

By this law, a human being ranks in value, or dignity, inferior to property, which cannot be recovered, without a *trial by jury*.† Thousands of colored freemen have been enslaved for life, under cover of this law, which leaves a wide door open for fraud and collusion.‡

Such is negro slavery in the free *Republican* States of America. The servitude among the Hebrews, compared to it, was a mild, patriarchal government. Nor can it compete in point of lenity, with the slavery of the Athenians, the Cretans, or the ancient Germans. Among the ancients, there was, in most cases, some mode of escape ; a place of refuge from a cruel master ; but there is neither

* American Quarterly Review. No. 29, p. 91.

† Of late years, three or four of the free states have granted a jury trial to the party claimed.

‡ We give these outlines as the general or prevailing features of the institution. In some of the States, modifications exist, which soften its asperities.

temple nor sanctuary where the American slave can take shelter : the Fugitive law pursues him to the utmost extent of the Union. A doubt may well be entertained, whether American Slavery be not equal to, or even more cruel than the bondage of the Israelites in Egypt, for whose redemption such stupendous miracles were performed, bringing upon their oppressors such signal judgments.

Even between the Spartan slaves or Helots, and that of our own, there are points of comparison where the balance will be found against us. The Helots possessed the privilege of accumulating property, whereas, our slaves have nothing they can call their own but their sufferings and their sorrows. The Helots could not be sold out of the small state where they dwelt ; and family ties were not liable to be burst asunder ; the reverse of this prevails with us to such an extent as to constitute one of the greatest refinements of cruelty, belonging to American slavery.

The same may be said of the Roman slaves, the most abused of all the slaves of antiquity.

(1.) No particular color or origin marked him out for proscription.

(2.) He was often allowed by the master to accumulate property, called the slave's *peculium*, on which he traded for his own benefit.

(3.) In the time of Augustus, the slave was heard, and *his testimony admitted against his master*.

(4.) Their heathen temples afforded them safety. It was deemed an act of sacrilege to drag them thence.

(5.) Many of them were carefully instructed, and under the Christian Emperors their *spiritual welfare* was not neglected.

(6.) No laws existed against their being emancipated or instructed.

(7.) A large share of human happiness, or misery, arises

from comparison. The severe Spartan discipline imposed on the free, made the sufferings of the slave to be less felt. The master and slave experienced equally the disadvantages of the semi-barbarous state, and in despotic governments the freeman was made to feel, as well as the slave, the exercise of arbitrary power. But the American slave must have his sufferings enhanced when he contrasts his condition with that of the whites around him. He beholds the latter, placed on an eminence where despotic power cannot reach them, and in full possession of "liberty and the pursuit of happiness," and all the means of human enjoyment, and he bemoans the more his sad condition.

But what if semi-barbarous and idolatrous nations have, in some cases, exceeded us in cruelty to their slaves?—Shall the measure of justice and mercy of those nations—nations who sat in darkness, and worshipped gods of wood and stone—and who bowed down before the crocodile and the ox—shall their measure be the measure of a people who enjoy all the advantages of Christian light and knowledge—who have been outwardly blessed above all other nations of the earth?

In process of time, the inhabitants of these American colonies began to feel, in their turn, the rod of oppression, by the invasion of their civil rights on the part of the mother country, and they resolved on resistance by an appeal to arms. The approach of a great national calamity now weighed heavily upon their minds: for they were few in number, and deficient in resources. Humbled by the prospect before them, and feeling their weakness and their need, they appealed to the great Ruler of the world for the justice of their cause. But how propitiate this righteous Judge? For while making this solemn appeal, they were inflicting a flagrant act of injustice on half a million of their fellow beings. How appear before Him as supplicants, whilst

themselves were wielding a rod over these infinitely more oppressive than that of which they complained, and daily adding to that number, by a most iniquitous trade ? Thence, the response which they received or felt from the Divine oracle, was doubtless of the same import, with that formerly announced through the Jewish seer. “Is not this the fast that I have chosen ? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke.”—“Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer.”—“Then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day.”

Such were the circumstances, and such, we believe were the impressions of the Congress of 1774, when they pledged themselves and the nation, in the following manner :

We will neither import nor purchase any slaves imported after the first of December next ; after which time, we will wholly discontinue the slave trade, and will neither be concerned in it ourselves, nor will we hire our vessels, nor sell our commodities or manufactures to those who are concerned in it.

This was a good beginning, and for some years, the work of reform advanced. Societies were organized for the protection of the free blacks, and the emancipation of the slaves, both in the north and south : including among the active members, many of the leading and most influential men in the nation. The equality of human rights was everywhere recognized and loudly proclaimed. Petitions against slavery were *respectfully* received and considered by the new government ; and in short, such measures were ultimately adopted, as insured the emancipation of the slaves in all the states north of Delaware. Thus the plighted faith of the nation, given in the hour of calamity, was so far kept inviolate.

But the American people were now to be subjected to a trial, which proved more severe than that through which they had lately passed—the trial of prosperity. The arduous struggle was over; the danger had vanished; an independent government was established.

But the form called the confederation, having been found, upon trial, in many respects defective, a convention of Delegates from all the States met in Philadelphia, in the year 1787, to frame a new Constitution. In the course of the debates in this body, the slave question was brought up. Two of the slaveholding states, South Carolina and Georgia, wished to secure to themselves the right of importing slaves. This subject, in connexion with another, was finally referred to a committee of one from each State. Their report, called a compromise, with some amendments was adopted, and now forms a part of our Constitution, and is as follows:

“The migration or importation of such persons, as any of the states now existing shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by the Congress prior to the year 1808, but a tax, or duty, may be imposed on such importation not exceeding ten dollars for each person.”

The states in favor of allowing the importation were New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maryland, North and South Carolina, and Georgia. Those against it, were New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Virginia. New York, it would appear did not vote,* and Rhode Island, was not represented in the convention. In the framing of this provision, the circumlocution resorted to, to avoid the word *slave*, is worthy of note. The convention, no doubt, were deeply sensible of the glaring incongruity of inserting *such* a word in an instrument, the great object of which they had declared to be, in the pream-

* Pitkins' Hist. vol. 11. p. 262.

ble thereto, to establish *justice*, and secure the *blessings of liberty*.

This fatal act of the convention continued the African slave-trade for twenty years longer, in direct violation of the solemn pledge given by the Congress of 1774. It opened a door for an extensive domestic traffic in slaves, and their consequent introduction into new states. It formed, in short, the first link in the chain of causes, that has expanded what was then comparatively but a germ of evil, and within control, into one of giant stature, confounding the sagacity of the statesman, withering the hopes of the Christian, and exciting the just fears of all, for the peace, permanency, and happiness of the American Union.

As the population of the United States increased, the Federal Government admitted new states into the Union. The purchase of Louisiana, a large portion of it as luxuriant in its soil as it was vast in its extent, opened a new field for the industry and enterprise of our people, and in 1819, Missouri, a district forming a part of the new purchase, made application to Congress for admission, and a bill was accordingly framed, and read in the House. An amendment being proposed excluding slavery from the said state, a warm debate ensued, which was protracted through a part of two sessions, and in the issue of which the country manifested an intense interest. It was felt to be the final struggle to prevent the diffusion of a great moral and political evil throughout that fair and productive region. As it respected Missouri, the effort failed; but a restriction was obtained, by what has been termed a compromise, limiting slavery in the remainder of the territory, to the south of the thirty-sixth and a half degree of North latitude.

At the period of the Revolution, there were about four

hundred and fifty thousand slaves, in the six states south of Pennsylvania ; to those, which still remain to be slave states, seven more have been added, of the thirteen admitted since that period. Thus slavery is now established in thirteen states, containing more than two million five-hundred thousand slaves, diffused over a surface of about five hundred and seventy thousand square miles, or nearly double the extent of the thirteen original states. Besides these states, we have three slave territories : Florida, that part of the Missouri Territory south of the thirty-sixth and a half degree of north latitude, and the District of Columbia ; all of which contain a number of slaves ; and over one hundred and eighty thousand square miles of surface.

Having thus given a brief view of the rise, progress, and character of slavery in the United States, we proceed to speak of the internal or domestic traffic.

The slave region in the United States now stretches over a surface of seven hundred and fifty thousand square miles, or nearly five hundred millions of acres, an extent of territory, more than double that of the whole thirteen original states.

Those among the old states which depended mainly on slave labor, were Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia. As long as the staple of any state consisted of tobacco, rice, or cotton, the labor of slaves was deemed profitable, and great numbers of them were employed on the plantations where they were born and raised ; and thus were retained in their own neighborhoods.

But a powerful cause now began to operate, in effecting an important change in the agricultural operations of several of the slave states ; we mean the increasing impoverishment of the lands, and the consequent inability of the

cultivators, to compete with the rich soil of the new settlements. Hence, their attention became directed to the raising of bread stuffs, and other provisions ; thus lessening the demand for slave labor. But in the mean time, the rapid clearing and cultivation of the new states, producing heavy crops of cane and cotton, and affording immense profits to the planters, together with the abolition of the foreign trade by Congress in 1808, and in 1820 making it piracy and punishable with death ; all combined greatly to increase the demand, and to enhance the price of slaves, thus, not only was a most lucrative market opened for the supernumerary slaves in the old states, but a strong inducement offered to rear them for sale. Such was the origin of the extensive internal traffic in slaves, which has been carried on for many years in these states ; a traffic scarcely exceeded, in the extent of its iniquity and barbarity by the foreign slave trade itself.

The immediate causes of the internal trade, arise from the laws which give the master the power of selling his slaves, and which allow of their deportation, like bales of cotton, from state to state, or to any part of the slave region.

The domestic slave trade receives supplies from all the states in the Union where the African complexion is found. Virginia alone rears six thousand annually for this traffic besides several thousand supernumerary ; Tennessee, although a young state, a considerable number ; and other states, their surplus slave population in different proportions.

The regular trader limits his operations to the slave states ; carries them on in open day ; and shamelessly advertises in the public papers, his occupation, name, residence, and terms. The sphere of action of the kid-

napper is much more extensive ; they are found in every part of the country, preying alike upon the freeman and the slave, and are employed in their vocation both night and day ! In the day, they often single out their victims, and in the night they secure them, and bear them off. In other cases, having first ascertained the practicability of his plan, he obtains a warrant by virtue of the well known fugitive law ; drags the individual he had marked out before a Justice of the Peace, and by the aid of an accomplice, and a forged advertisement prepared beforehand, succeeds in identifying the man with the pretended slave thus advertised, and of whom he is in search. The Justice imposed upon in this manner, or conniving at the fraud, grants him the required documents ; and under the *protection* of the aforesaid law, this victim of barbarity is soon removed beyond the reach of inquiry. This may serve as one example of the many artful expedients resorted to by the kidnapper to effect his purpose. We have here described him, as operating in the *free* states. In the slave region he finds less difficulty in the exercise of his calling. The reader may remember, that there, every colored man is, in the eye of the law, a slave until the contrary is proved ; and further, that no colored person, bond or free, can be a witness against a *white man*. Hence, every freeman who has not a white skin to attest his title to liberty, must carry the proof of it, written or printed, in his pocket. The kidnapper, therefore, has only to obtain this proof by force or fraud from the man whom he has marked out for his prey, and his cruel purpose is readily accomplished. The scenes thus exhibited in most parts of our country, appear in a still more offensive and concentrated form, at the seat of government, which has been made, for years past, the head quarters of this traffic. The District of Columbia,

where the functions of every department of our free government are exercised, and over which the National Legislature has exclusive jurisdiction, should, at the least, be an asylum where the rights of freemen might repose in security; exhibiting to the world, an exemplification of the working of our free institutions, without a jar, or an incongruity.

The following history lifts the veil, and presents a startling and mortifying contrast.

The District of Columbia was ceded to the United States by Maryland and Virginia, and the laws in respect to slavery have been left with little alteration, as they were at the time of the cession about the close of the last century. There is, however, in addition to these laws an enactment of the city of Washington, by virtue of authority delegated by *Congress*, bearing date the 28th of July, 1831, granting licences to those "who trade or traffic in slaves for profit, on the payment of four hundred dollars"!!! Since the cession, numerous corruptions have grown up unheeded, and slave dealers and kidnappers, gaining confidence from impunity or the sanction of law, have made the seat of the general government their head-quarters for carrying on the domestic *slave trade*. Various advertisements, offering cash for "negroes," are contained in the public prints of that city in the face of Congress and the world, and indicate the openness and extent of the traffic. Thus—

"Vice is a monster of so frightful mein,
As to be hated, needs but to be seen.
But seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

Officers of the general government are employed, and the public prisons used, in carrying on the trade. Private and

secret prisons also exist in the District, for the same purpose. The trade is not confined to slaves for life. Many who have but a limited time to serve, are kidnapped, and sent off. Free persons of color coming into the District, and being unable, from ignorance or fraud, to prove their freedom, are thrown into jail; no owner appears, and instead of being discharged and compensated for the injury done them, are sold into slavery, to pay *jail fees!* In a case of this kind, two respectable citizens went forward to the deputy marshall, and offered their *security* for the fees, if he would give them time to obtain the proofs of the man's freedom; but the deputy marshall refused the delay, and he was sold to a dealer, and carried off. Dr. Torrey found a number of free blacks confined in a garret in Washington city, and among the rest a young widow, a free woman, with a child at the breast, who had been seized in a state of pregnancy but a few days after the death of her husband, dragged from her bed, and without clothes, and a rope round her neck, taken to a tavern in Maryland; and thence to the place where she was found. Her purchaser had left her a few weeks, and had gone to the Eastern shore in search of more black people, in order to make up a drove for Georgia. During this interval, the Doctor obtained proofs of the freedom of the whole company, and they were released.

A freeman was seized, ignorant and friendless, and thrown into jail, where his legs became so frozen, that when released, he walked upon his knees a cripple for the remainder of his life.

Another freeman had married a slave, by whom he had a family of children. Being industrious and frugal, he was enabled to purchase his wife and children. On returning to his family after some days absence in his lawful occu-

pations, he found his house empty. His family had all been kidnapped and carried off in his absence. In unutterable distress, he applied to the former owner, (a humane man,) who went with him in pursuit of them. It was found that they had been lodged in one of the jails in the District of Columbia for a short time, but had been hurried away from thence, no one could tell whither, and that they were irrecoverably lost.

In the prosecution of this trade, numerous devices are resorted to. A dealer holds an indented servant, who has two or three years to serve; he causes him to be arrested as a runaway and thrown into jail; after a time, he is sold out for his jail fees, when a *trusty* friend buys him in, and he is converted into a slave for life. Again; this class is purchased at cheap rates by the slave traders, and carried off, where the proofs of their freedom cannot be had, and their protestations are unheeded.

Instances of death from the anguish of despair; of self-maiming, and suicide, by the victims to this trade, have occurred in the District. Scenes of human beings exposed at public vendue, are here exhibited and permitted by the laws of the general government. Almost every week, droves are brought into town of ten or twelve chained together. Twenty-two or three were observed, on one occasion, to be brought out of the cellar of a small house in the District; a by-stander inquired of a *civil officer*, how many slaves it was lawful to confine in a damp cellar; the officer replied, "as many as it will hold." The same thing exists with regard to shipping them; they may crowd as many in a vessel as it will hold.

It is believed, that many thousand colored persons are annually transported by land and sea, from the District of Columbia, and parts adjacent, a considerable number of

whom are entitled to their freedom by the laws of the land. Advertisements are issued by the traders, of the sailing of slavers, at stated periods, from the port of Alexandria, in the District. The number transported by land and water to the new States have been estimated as high as 60,000 in one year.

Thus, it appears, that while a law of Congress exists, declaring the African slave trade to be piracy, American slavers are fitted out at the *seat of government*, the time of their sailing with their human cargoes publicly advertised in one or more of the most conspicuous papers in the United States, and thus, the same flag which waves over and protects the domestic slave ships and their crews, as American citizens, *if used by the same citizens in the foreign slave trade*, subjects them, on due conviction of the crime, to the punishment of *death*!

Neither can we discern any material difference between the foreign and domestic slave trade. Scarcely an evil is seen in the former, that has not its parallel in the latter. No inconsiderable proportion of its victims are freemen by the laws of the land, seized by violence, and carried off; the dearest ties of human nature are cruelly violated;—husbands and wives, parents and children, torn asunder once and for ever; and they doubtless feel as great a horror at the prospect of deportation from the land that gave them birth, and from their friends and relatives, to the far distant shores of the Missouri and the Mississippi, as did their forefathers in crossing the Atlantic.

The people in the District of Columbia, have not been indifferent spectators of this traffic. In 1812, a Grand Jury at Alexandria presented this trade as a grievance, exhibiting a scene of wretchedness and human degradation, disgraceful to our characters as citizens of a free govern-

ment. "True it is," said they, "that these dealers in the persons of our fellow men, collect within this district from various parts, numbers of those victims of slavery, and lodge them in some place of confinement until they have completed their numbers. They are then turned out in our streets, and exposed to view loaded with chains, as if they had committed some heinous offence against the laws." "We consider it a *grievance* that the interposition of civil authority cannot be had to prevent parents from being wrested from their offspring, and children from their parents, without respect to the ties of nature. We consider those grievances demanding legislative redress, especially the practice of making sale of black people, who are, *by the will of their masters*, free at the expiration of a term of years."

Judge Morrell, in his charge to the Grand Jury at Washington, in 1816, urged upon their attention the slave trade carried on in the District. He said, that the frequency with which the streets of the city had been crowded with *manacled captives*, sometimes even on the Sabbath, could not fail to shock the feelings of all humane persons; that it was repugnant to the spirit of our political institutions, and the rights of man; and he believed, was calculated to impair the public morals, by familiarizing scenes of cruelty to the minds of youth."

A petition was presented to the Congress of 1828, signed by more than one thousand inhabitants of the District, praying for the gradual abolition of slavery therein. A member of Congress from Virginia, in 1816, introduced a resolution into the House, "that a committee be appointed to inquire into the existence of an inhuman and illegal traffic in slaves, carried on in and through the District of Columbia, and report whether any, or what measures, are ne-

cessary to put a stop to the same. Numerous petitions have, for years past, been presented to Congress from different parts of the country on the same subject, but *all in vain*. These atrocious crimes continue to be perpetrated to this very hour. While we are writing, a free colored man lies in the jail at Alexandria, having been seized and dragged from on board a vessel trading from Delaware to that port. Proofs of his freedom have been forwarded, but his keepers refuse to deliver him up until his jail fees are paid. A just fear is entertained that he will share the fate of thousands of his brethren before the money can be sent on for his release. Another freeman has just arrived in Wilmington, who was seized, a few months ago, by three men in open day, while cutting wood in a secluded spot, near Smyrna, in Delaware state. They bound him with ropes, and as soon as night closed in, a carriage came up, into which he was forced, and hurried off. Thus far we have endeavored to delineate the features of negro slavery, and its action upon those who are within the reach of its iron grasp; and great as we have found the evil to be, we have yet seen but a part, and perhaps the smaller part of the mischief of which it is capable. Grant it the character and progression which it has maintained among us for the last fifty years, to continue without control, (and controlled, we believe, it cannot be, except by the emancipation of the slaves) and the final result in all human probability will be, such a disorder or destruction of all the moral elements that sustain and bind human society together, that a general convulsion throughout those states where it prevails, must be the consequence.

The secondary causes which are operative in bringing it about, are set forth in a speech of Thomas Marshall, a son of Judge Marshall, in the legislature of Virginia—of

that Virginia, once the "fairest region of America; every word of which," says the Reviewer, "is true."*

"Wherefore then object to slavery? Because it is ruinous to the whites—retards improvement—roots out an industrious population—banishes the yeomanry of the country—deprives the spinner, the weaver, the smith, the shoemaker, the carpenter, of employment and support. This evil admits of no remedy; it is increasing, and will continue to increase, until the whole country will be inundated with one black wave, covering its whole extent, with a few white faces here and there floating on the surface. The master has no capital but what is vested in [slaves;] the father, instead of being richer for his sons, is at a loss to provide for them—there is no diversity of occupations, no incentive to enterprise. Labor of every species is disreputable, because performed mostly by slaves. Our towns are stationary, our villages almost everywhere declining, and the general aspect of the country marks the curse of an idle, wasteful, reckless population, who have no interest in the soil, and care not how much it is impoverished. Public improvements are neglected, and the entire continent does not present a region for which nature has done so much, and art so little. If cultivated by free labor, the soil of Virginia is capable of sustaining a dense population, among whom labor would be honorable, and where the 'busy hum of men' would tell that all were happy, and that all were free."

There is one evil which is not adverted to in the above catalogue—the increasing danger of a servile insurrection; to which may be added, the constant dread of such an event, with the consciousness of its becoming yearly, more and more within the reach of probability. No truth, we think, is now better established than this—that the slaves

* American Quarterly Review, Vol. 24, p. 392.

increase faster than the whites. Thus, (notwithstanding the constant drain of her slaves going on in Virginia to supply the plantations of the new states,) the slaves have so multiplied, that, though east of the Blue Ridge in 1790 the whites had a majority of twenty-five thousand, in 1830, the blacks had grown to a majority of eighty-one thousand!

Few, if any, of the pro-slavery writers have defended the abstract right over slaves, or have been willing to relinquish the hope of the final eradication of slavery. That it cannot be perpetual, is certain. The continual increase of numbers must produce, in process of time, such a fall in the price of labor, and a consequent rise in that of provisions, that the cost of rearing a slave will exceed the price of his labor. The coming of this event must be expedited by the progressive reduction of the fertility of the soil, the never-failing effect of slavery. When it does arrive, no other alternative will be left to the holder of slaves than emancipation or famine. But the Christian moralist may, with reason, entertain the belief, that the action of these causes will be too slow for the requisitions of Divine justice, and that the rod of oppression will be broken, as in the case of the Egyptian tyrant, by means less tardy in their operations!

Some writers, in defence of slavery, tell us, that it is a necessary evil that must be borne with: one which we have had no hand in creating, and are not competent to remedy: that emancipation without removal would produce greater evils than all the evils of slavery.

It is true, that the mother country forced the slaves upon several of her colonies: but it is also true, that a large amount of capital was employed by the *Northern states in the foreign slave trade*—that northern votes secured a majority in the Convention, for continuing the importation of slaves

into the United States for twenty years longer—and that Northern votes in Congress turned the scale in favor of the introduction of slavery into the extensive and fertile territories of Missouri and Arkansas. All, therefore, are guilty ; the whole nation is implicated in creating and sustaining negro slavery; but we leave it to Him, who “soundeth the reins and thoughts of men,” to decide where the balance of iniquity preponderates.

Emancipation forces itself upon all minds, as the only radical cure for slavery—the negro slavery of America, fruitful in present, and pregnant with future evils. The moralist sees it debasing the soul of its victim, created for the noblest purpose, to a level with the brute, and corrupting the minds of those who wield its iron sceptre. The Christian beholds its overgrown iniquities, and fears the consequence, for he knows that “God is just, and will break in pieces the oppressor.” The politician sees it to be an uncompromising enemy to national wealth, dependent as it must be on industry and economy ; for the slave is indolent and improvident—producing as little, and consuming as much as he can. He casts his eye over Virginia, who in days past sat as a queen among nations ;—he compares her with her sister Pennsylvania, two hundred years younger than she, and he finds the latter greatly in advance in population—in the price of her lands—in agriculture, commerce and manufacturers,—in roads, bridges, and all public improvements:—in short, he sees the land that had “blossomed as the rose,” converted into a wilderness ; instead of the fir-tree, has come up the thorn, and instead of the myrtle tree, has come up the briar—an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off ; for, as he extends his view, he finds the painful truth demonstrated, that wherever slavery has prevailed, the same evils

have been inflicted, that have humbled and impoverished the once noble state of Virginia.

Thus, of all persons, emancipation presses itself with most urgency upon *slave-holders*. Let it not be believed that "it would produce greater evils than all the evils of slavery." This opinion is drawn, probably, from events that occurred in St. Domingo—events caused, we believe, by the vacillating legislation of the French government, and the improper conduct of its agents, and of the planters in that Island. Happily, another experiment has been made in the same region, and with very different results ; which we shall now in a brief manner, proceed to lay before the reader, extracted from a work, entitled, "Familiar letters to Henry Clay of Kentucky, describing a winter in the West Indies, by Joseph John Gurney."—1840.

The first island visited by our author, was Tortola, with a population of five thousand ; of which about two hundred only are white. No inconvenience was felt, that he could discover, from this disparity in numbers, and freedom was reported to be working well. A school for black children, which he entered, was found to be satisfactory. In the jail, there was one prisoner only, with the jailor and the judge. Not a single criminal indictment was found, at the last three courts. Wm. R. Isaacs, the former President of the Island, had fifteen hundred free negroes under his care. He stated of his own accord, that his laborers were working well. "I have," said he, "no complaint to make." A large proportion of the island had passed out of the hands of the proprietors, into those of the merchant and money-lender, which was taken for conclusive evidence against slavery. He visited President Isaac's property, saw "a large company of negroes, male and female, heartily at work holing"—and "their work was excellent."

Wages were small; only six-pence sterling per day; but their privileges, viz. a cottage, good provision grounds, and pasture for their stock, free, were worth at least double the amount of their wages.

The next Island visited, was St. Christopher. Robert Claxton, the solicitor-general of the colony, "a gentleman of great respectability and intelligence," informed the visitors, that six years ago, and just before the act of emancipation—a period of great depression and alarm—(such alarm as our southern brethren are wont to indulge in, at the thought of emancipation) a certain property, with the slaves upon it, was worth only two thousand pounds; "but now," said the owner, "I would not sell it for six thousand." This rise was found to be "general and considerable." "I asked President Crook, and some other persons," says the author, "whether there was a single individual on the island, who wished for the restoration of slavery." Answer, "Certainly not one." Wages seven pence to ninepence sterling, besides the usual privileges. "But the negroes have no difficulty in earning from two to three shillings per day, by *job-work*." "The change for the better," said the Methodist minister, Cudman, "in the dress, demeanor, and welfare of the people, is *prodigious*." The difficulty experienced by the "gentry living in the town, in procuring fowls, eggs, &c. from the negroes, is considerably increased. The reason is well known—the laborers make use of them for home consumption. Marriage is *now* become frequent among them, and a profusion of eggs is expended on their wedding cakes!" There are nine churches on the island, containing nearly six thousand members. The Lieutenant-Governor stated, that he had just received the reports of the stipendiary magistrates, as to the general state of their respective districts on

this island, and they were, *without exception*, most cheering and satisfactory. The author concluded his visit as before, in holding two religious meetings, thronged to excess ; but strict attention, and good order prevailed.

The author passed by Nevis and Monserrat on account of the fever prevalent there ; but the report of the stipendiary magistrate of Nevis, to the Governor-General, for the half-year ending with the eleventh month, (Nov.) 1839, states that “ the conduct of the laborers was peaceable and orderly, and that a good understanding generally prevailed, between them and their employers—that schools are numerous and well attended, marriages frequent, and the sabbath well observed.” The report from H. Hamilton, President of Monserrat, to Sir Wm. Colbrook, dated Jan. 10, 1840, says, “ It affords me great satisfaction to report to your Excellency the good and orderly conduct of our laboring population. During the Christmas holidays, our churches and chapels were crowded to excess by a well-dressed peasantry, and our jail nearly untenanted.”

The author also visited Antigua and Jamaica ; but our space is too limited, to follow him in his most cheering, and deeply interesting narrative. It furnishes, in substance, the same results as stated in the foregoing account. He every where found a “ rapid increase, and vast extent of elementary and Christian education—schools for infants, young persons and, adults, multiplying in every direction—a decided diminution, and, in many districts, almost an extinction of crime—a happy change of the general, and nearly universal practice of concubinage, for the equally general adoption of marriage”—the blessed fruits of the diffusion of vital Christianity, with her “ handmaid,” liberty, among this so lately poor, oppressed, debased, and degraded race of men. In a physical and political point of

view, the change was seen to be equally striking. The external comforts of the laborers were increased tenfold; the price of land, and all kinds of property, steadily advancing; repairs and improvements, not thought of under slavery, undertaken with that spirit of enterprise found only in the breasts of freemen.

The author concludes his narrative by concentrating the whole subject under five heads.

1st. The emancipated negroes are working well on the estates of their old masters.

2d. The debit in account of the planters is almost as much decreased as are his crosses and cares. One planter stated, that he had rather, for the profit's sake, make sixty tierces of coffee under freedom, than one hundred and twenty under slavery.

3d. Real property risen, and is rising in value.

4th. The personal comforts of the laboring population under freedom are multiplied tenfold.

5th, and lastly. The moral and religious improvement of this people under freedom is more than equal to the increase of their comforts.

We ought not to omit mentioning the satisfaction and gratitude manifested by the people, on account of the visit paid them by their philanthropic friend. "One woman," says he, "in particular, was at a loss to express the multitude of her good wishes. As far as I could understand her *patois*, they were, that "sweet massa might be well fed on his journey, and supplied with plenty of the Holy Spirit for his work in the gospel."

On the subject of free labor, as compared with slave labor, the author has the following remarks.

"Many a time have I seen the slaves of Virginia and the Carolinas at work in the fields, under the surveillance

of a white overseer, and I could not believe that the work obtained was in quantity comparable to that of free men ; for the slaves were laboring without vigor, and the overseer was doing nothing. On inquiry, in South Carolina especially, I found that the quantity of work procured from the slaves was even much less than I had anticipated. I understood, that in a body of slaves on any estate, the proportion in active service, at any given time, is not greater in America than it was in the West Indies. There are the old, the infirm, the sick, the shammers of sickness, the mothers of young children, &c.,—all these belong to the dead weight, and they leave about *one-third* of the black population in actual operation. Now this operative class has no stimulus to labor, except compulsion, i. e. the whip ; and people neither *will* nor *can* perform, by compulsion, an average quantity of continuous work. That they should do so, is contrary to the laws of nature, and to the constitution, not only of the negro, but of all mankind. The result is, that the cotton and rice planters of Georgia and South Carolina are very generally contenting themselves with half a day's work from their negroes. Their task is finished by twelve, one, or two o'clock ; and for the rest of the day they are left to themselves. Most willingly do I allow, that this arrangement is to the credit of the benevolence of their masters, though I fear that this prevailing kindness has its occasional painful exceptions ; but the plain fact is, that the slave cannot fairly do more, or much more, than he is now doing. Compel him to perform the task of a freeman, and you drive him to death. Where the only stimulus to exertion which survives under slavery, I mean compulsion, is withdrawn, the work, of course, becomes light in proportion."

"It appears, then, that the work obtained from three hundred

slaves in your Southern states, cannot be estimated as more in quantity than the fair day's labor, on wages, of one-sixth of their number, that is, of fifty freemen. But the whole three hundred slaves must be supported ; and the expense of supporting them in your states is vastly greater than it was in the West Indies. I was surprised to hear, on excellent authority, when lately in South Carolina, that the average expense of maintaining a slave, on estates where they are liberally treated, is not less than fifty dollars per annum."

We think the mere maintenance is here overrated, perhaps ; and the estimate of fifty freemen as equal to three hundred slaves may be considered as an underrate of slave labor. The average cost of a slave is now not less than five hundred dollars, the interest of which is thirty dollars. The average serviceable period of a slave's life does not exceed twenty-one years, counting from his maturity ; his annual depreciation, therefore, is twenty-four dollars, nearly. His clothing can scarcely be less than sixteen dollars a year. The incidental expenses of medical attendance, average overseership, and loss of time by sickness, running away, &c., may be put at sixteen dollars more ; which, together, make an annual amount of eighty-five dollars. What the slave consumes, and what he wastes by omission and commission, will keep a free laborer, and the wages of the latter will not rate over eighty-five dollars a year in the South. But the slave does, on an average, only three-fourths the labor of a freeman at most, leaving a balance against each slave of twenty-one dollars per annum. To this must be added the slave's keeping when past labor, the progressive impoverishment of the land under slavery, and the many vexations that accompany the system, independent of its moral evils.

When the author returned to the United States, he visited Washington, and had an interview with some of his southern friends, to whom he related the results of the West India experiment.

It was listened to with the greatest attention, and after it had been brought to a close, a belief was expressed, not only in the accuracy of the relation itself, but in that of the five points, partly *pecuniary* and partly physical and moral, on which it furnished such ample evidences of the favorable working of freedom. But an effort was made to show, in reply, that the emancipation of the blacks in the West Indies was safe to the white inhabitants, only because it was guarded by the strong arm of Great Britain—that the two races are so distinct and opposite that, without the intervention of such power, they could not be expected to live together in peace, in the capacity of free men—that where the blacks preponderate in numbers, the whites would be overwhelmed—that where the numbers are equal, there would arise interminable violence and strife—that in America, therefore, the political objections to the abolition of slavery are not to be surmounted.

These arguments the author replies to, as follows :—

“ First, with regard to Jamaica, the strong arm of the British government was indeed considered necessary for the protection of the whites during slavery, when the planters and their families were on the edge of a volcano which might any day explode ; and, notwithstanding that protection, I believe it may truly be said, that an explosion must long since have taken place, had it not been for the unrivalled patience and forbearance of the negro race. But now, under freedom, the volcano is extinguished ; the planters and their families are in perfect safety ; the protecting arm of a third party is no longer requisite, and, to a great

extent, it has already been withdrawn. We were thoroughly satisfied, in all the islands which we visited, that the few troops remaining in them were, in a political point of view, utterly needless, and might be withdrawn, to a man, with entire impunity ; and this, I believe, is the general opinion of the planters themselves. In the mean time, we did not find that any inconvenience is arising from the constitutional difference of the two races. Certainly there is no antipathy of the blacks towards the whites, but rather the feelings of respect, deference, and affection ; and, on the other hand, the prejudices of the whites against the blacks is greatly on the decline.”

“ That the position of things which I have now described as existing in the West Indies, is one of harmlessness and safety, cannot reasonably be denied. Experience has already proved it to be so, to a considerable extent. Nor can I perceive a single sound reason why it should be otherwise, were it tried in the slave states of your own Union.”

“ While it is obvious that the juxtaposition of the two races already exists, and *cannot be avoided*, it is to me equally evident, that the true danger of that juxtaposition lies in the relations of *slavery*. These are unnatural ; they are opposed to the eternal rule of right, and they contain in themselves, the seeds of violence and confusion.

What will those now say, who oppose the emancipation of the slave ? The enormous political and moral evils flowing from slavery, are demonstrated and acknowledged on all hands. The main arguments against emancipation have hitherto been—that the two races cannot live together in a state of freedom without collision, and war, and bloodshed ; and that the negro cannot take care of himself, if the inherent rights of “ liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,”

which slavery has wrested from him, are again restored to him. These arguments are now demonstrated, *practically*, to be unfounded, and ought to be for ever put to rest.

To the slaveholders here, the West Indian experiment must prove the more satisfactory, as the slave is exhibited in the required position, namely,—immediately *before* and *after* emancipation. This transition, too, has been greater than would be that of our southern slave, as the latter is, we believe, less debased in general than was the former. But it must be kept in view, that in the case of the West Indian slave, a strict attention to his spiritual welfare accompanied, and has followed the change of his condition. Certainly we should not expect more of the colored, than of the white race. A community of the latter, wholly destitute of religious and literary instruction, would be no better than a mob, and life and property would there find no security. The same with the colored race. These moral elements must be interwoven with those of freedom, in order to render it a blessing, either to the one or the other.

George Washington in his inaugural speech to the Congress in its first session, under the new Constitution, in New York, said:—"In the honorable qualifications of your body, I behold the surest pledges, that the foundation of our national policy will be laid in the pure and immutable principles of private morality, and the pre-eminence of free government be exemplified by all the attributes which can win the *affections* of its citizens, and command the *respect of the world*." And in his farewell address, he called the attention of the American people to the important truths, "that of all the dispositions and habits, which lead to political prosperity, *religion and morality* are indispensable supports;" and that "reason and experience both forbid us to expect, that national morality can prevail to the exclusion of religious principle."

And the Congress, in their reply to his address in New York, said:

“We feel with you the *strongest obligation* to cherish a conscious responsibility for the destiny of Republican Liberty, and to seek the only sure means of preserving and recommending the precious deposit in a system of legislation founded on the principles of honest policy, and directed by the spirit of diffusive patriotism.”

The foregoing history of slavery in the United States, shows that these pledges remain, as yet, unredeemed; and the Christian inhabitants of this land—of the Christian world—have a right to expect that Congress and the States will hasten to discharge those high obligations, by adopting such a course of legislation, as will for ever wipe off from our national escutcheon the foul blots with which it still remains to be disfigured and disgraced.

The “religious principle” above alluded to, constitutes the ground work both of national and individual morality. If permitted to have its full effect on the heart, it will render man, in every possible situation, the friend of man: it will change the relation of master and slave from *war* to peace, for its fruits, universally, are “peace on earth, and good will to men.”

Many of our fellow citizens of the slave states have experienced its operation, so far as to treat their slaves with a degree of humanity and kindness, and to abstain from fostering the internal traffic by the breaking of family ties. We rejoice at any evidence of mitigation of cruelty in the treatment of the slave; but we should ever bear in mind that the accidents or concomitants of slavery are but a part of the evils involved in the system—that the vesting of arbitrary power in one man over another, lies at the root of the corrupt tree. The question, therefore, being not one

of treatment merely, but of principle, no compromise should be made with this iniquity on the score of kind usage, while man is held as the property of man.

Let the influences of this "religious principle" before adverted to in its partial operations, extend and prevail among our southern brethren, and all their mountains of difficulty will "skip like rams, and their little hills like lambs," and the fetters of the slave will be burst asunder. Their waste places will be rebuilt, their wilderness will become Eden, their desert like the garden of the Lord. "Joy and gladness will be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody."



ERRATA.

Page 35, 10th and 11th lines from bottom, for "two hundred" read *seventy*.
Page 46, line 3d from bottom, for "become Eden," read become *like* Eden.

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